of thought was social—the creation of an ideal human society. This emphasis was natural among a people accustomed to regard religion as primarily a matter of community utility, and particularly so since the majority of the philosophers were from the governing classes and were themselves office-holders. It cannot be too greatly emphasized that the chief problem to which most of the thinkers of the Chou addressed themselves was, how can society be saved? Cosmogony, cosmology, the nature of the gods —if any—and of man were subordinate and ancillary to this question.

From the standpoint of subsequent influence, the chief of the schools was that known to Westerners as Confucianism. The greatest figure in it was, of course, Confucius. The traditional dates of the sage, B.C. 551-479, may be in error, so at least one eminent scholar declares, by several years. The usual story of his life has it that he was born in one of the smaller of the feudal states, Lu, in the present province of Shantung, of aristocratic stock, of an aged father and a younger mother. His father died, so the story continues, during his son's infancy, and the sage was reared, in poverty, by his mother. He early showed a predilection for ceremonies and the learning of the past and achieved such proficiency in them that he attracted students. For years, the traditional accounts say, he held office in his native state, eventually rising to the highest position open to a subject, but in middle age he retired to private life, the reason usually assigned being that he resigned in protest against the unworthy conduct of his prince. During the next several years he travelled from state to state with a group of his disciples, hoping vainly that some ruler

would adopt his principles of government and employ him to carry them out. In his old age he returned to Lu and there died after some years of quiet spent in study and teaching. Dignified, courteous, conscientious, high-minded, studious, a lover of antiquity, of books, of ceremonial, and of music, thoughtful, affable, calm, serenely trustful in an overruling Providence—all these are terms which immediately come to mind as descriptive of the man pictured in the discourses transmitted by his faithful disciples. So far as he is disclosed to us in the records, Confucius was somewhat lacking in what we would regard as a sense of humor and displayed little if any love for children and, except for his mother's